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In this issue

EDITORIAL

BELARUS AND RUSSIA'S EXPANSIONIST POLICIES

IVONKA SURVILLA



The nuanced connections between perception and assumption, what we see and what we are predisposed to understand, play a significant role in the interpretation of distanced geopolitical environments. The intentions of a government, the sentiments and conviction of a population are not always clearly evident. This is the case with Belarus since Putin's annexation of Crimea and actions in Ukraine.

The perception of Belarus as a loyal ally of Russia, due to the seemingly erratic policies of its dictator Aliaksandr Lukashenka, has been a cause for concern for those who believe that the Republic of Belarus could become the next victim of Russian expansionism.

The potential for misreading, and indeed dismissing Belarus is however at times effectively countered.

I would like to express my appreciation to the President of Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, whose reaction to Belarus' and Armenia's official unwillingness in Riga to condemn the annexation of Crimea and Eastern Ukraine by Russia has been a model of restraint and understanding. "Each sovereign country has the right to say what serves best its political interests" - said Mr. Poroshenko. By interests, one can also assume external stresses.

Mr. Poroshenko is indeed in a position to understand that while negotiations are possible within the framework of EU's Eastern Partnership, countries, which, for different reasons, are in the Russian sphere of influence - such as Belarus and Armenia - are constrained by Moscow's prescriptions. According to Mr. Poroshenko, both of these members of EU's Eastern Partnership were not as categorical in their "non-condemnation" of Russia's aggression as they could have been. As French political analyst Slimane Zeghidour said, it is not easy to be an ex-Soviet republic when Moscow has all the necessary tools to destabilize its former colonies, including the Russian nationals who chose to stay there after the dissolution of the empire.

The dictator of Belarus is completely responsible for the present plight of the people of Belarus. He has faithfully served his Russian patrons in a long-standing game of juggling interests. The invasion of Ukraine however gave him some food for thought. He realized that Belarus could as easily become a victim of Putin's expansionist policies and, contrary to Ukraine, there would be nobody to defend a country, which so readily submits to Moscow's will. Perhaps he will juggle more intentionally with an eye to the West.

If so, then perhaps the people of Belarus will not be abandoned after all when Putin feels inclined to try his luck with Belarus, Russia's coveted "corridor to Europe."

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FEATURES

RADA BNR HAS PUBLISHED ITS EXTENDED ANNUAL REPORT

ALEŚ ČAJČYC



The Rada of the Belarusian Democratic Republic (the Rada BNR) has published its extended annual report for 2012, 2013 and 2014. The report comprises a short description of the international and national events for the relevant years, an illustrated chronological list of activities of the Rada, and selected documents released during this period: statements, speeches, open letters and appeals.

During the period of the report, the Rada BNR has represented Belarus at international conferences such as Legal Settlement of Communist Crimes, organised by members of the European Parliament in Brussels (June 2012), or the Symposium on Belarus at Wartburg College, Iowa (January 2014). The Rada has played an important role as a partner and moderator of the Belarusian democratic opposition by conducting projects and common initiatives such as the 2012 Memorandum to Safeguard the Independence of Belarus signed by representatives of all major democratic political organisations of Belarus. The Rada of the Belarusian Democratic Republic is the oldest existing Belarusian governmental body, established in 1917 at the All-Belarusian Congress of political organisations and local governments in Minsk. In 1918, the Rada BNR acted as the temporary supreme legislative and executive body of the Belarusian Democratic Republic. Since 1919, the Rada BNR is in exile and represents the interests of an independent and democratic Belarus in the Free World. During these years, the Rada BNR has established and maintains working contacts with representatives of governments of democratic countries, advising them on policies towards Belarus.

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PROLONGING THE VICTORY

DAVID MARPLES

May 9 is a day that elicits very different reactions in the former Soviet states. In Ukraine it has been quietly superseded by May 8 as a day of commemoration for those who died during the Second World War. In Russia, it has become the key event in historical memory for the Putin regime. And in Belarus it remains similarly the identity marker for President Aliaksandr Lukashenka.

Few would dispute the sacrifices and suffering experienced by the Republic of Belarus during the German-Soviet conflict. But it is the way in which the regime chooses to remember the war that deserves more questioning and scholarly inquiry. Moreover, the relationship between the occupied regions of Belarus and the contemporary state—the constant refrain from government media and propaganda—is at best tenuous.

The ritual of annual parades before the president and his entourage is becoming a weary one, and ironically somewhat awkward now that the government wishes to assert its independence from Russia and neutrality toward the Russian conflict with Ukraine.

Turning to each of those statements in turn, one can state the following aspects.

Memory is easily manipulated, and the refrain from the president of a unified common struggle against an invader was never very convincing. The republic, brought together by the results of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, was quickly divided by the invasion forces. Minsk was the first major Soviet city to fall to the Wehrmacht, just six days after it crossed the border. Prior to this event, the NKVD slaughtered over 1,000 prisoners in the western borderlands before the mass retreat. One of the first to flee the Belarusian capital was the First Party Sceretary of the Communist Party of Belarus, the loyal Stalinist Panteleimon Ponomarenko. He would do his best subsequently to hinder the development of a "homegrown" partisan movement.

The total losses in the republic, which as is well known have been inflated from one in four to the current one in three rarely mention the terror of the Holocaust and the eradication of Belarus' Jewish population, as well as of many Jews transported to the territory from other parts of Europe. Perhaps one-third of the total mortalities in Belarus consisted of Jews, but they were never singled out in Soviet reports of the confict, the total simply being added to general figures of casualties, and they are rarely featured in contemporary accounts.

Belarus suffered perhaps more than any other area during the war, a fact not always evident from the triumphant rhetoric in the pages of Belarus Segodnya and other state outlets. It did so in part because of Nazi retributions against partisans, losses in epic battles on Belarusian lands, and a population divided between pro-Soviet easterners and anti-Soviet westerners who had little affection for Stalin's regime.

But how is occupied Belarus linked to the independent state? We are three generations on from those who fought in the war. Though state education provides a constant refrain about the importance of the war, it is still unimaginable for the youth of today to comprehend what happened to their great grandparents.

The Stalinist state reemerged after the war. Troops returning from Western Europe, especially those interned in camps, as well as citizens who survived forced labor, were arrested upon arrival. Today's heroes, like the defender of the Brest Fortress, the Tatar Piotr Gavrilov, were sent into exile, sometimes for a decade or longer. Those who had fought in the underground and partisans also fell under suspicion. Some had already been executed. Little had changed since the 1930s other than the devastation of territory and slaughter of civilians.

Thereafter, despite the eventual prominence of former partisans as party leaders, restored Soviet rule brought Belarus closer to the Moscow center. Russian publications and Russian-language education predominated. The economy was closely tied to that of Russia, and the formerly rural landscape became urbanized, starting a trend that has continued to the present, of dying villages populated by ageing farmers.

Toward the end of the Soviet period, the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident in Ukraine contaminated 80% of Belarusian territory

with radioactive iodine. The more long-term dangers from strontium and cesium were mostly confined to the south-east.

Lukashenka revived the focus on the war—introduced into the USSR during the leadership of Leonid I. Brezhnev—around 2003-05. It offered a form of legitimacy and moral certitude, culminating in the legend that Belarus had "saved" Europe from the "brown plague" and preserved the future of democracy. In reality, Stalinism was truly victorious, correctly celebrated as a liberation, incorrectly commemorated as a form of salvation and preservation of people's livelihood.

Today the war has become sacrosanct, and in Belarus, as in Russia, it is very difficult if not impossible for scholars to question the official line. Books and memoirs appear in the republic as frequently as they did in the early postwar years. Those who question various interpretations are dismissed as "historical revisionists," a term that is as pervasive as "deviationist" used to be in the purges period.

Every town and village has some sort of war memorial, and some memory of the conflict. But can such memory be separated from the Stalinist system that caused such cultural and physical destruction from the 1930s onward? And would it not be more fitting and appropriate to remember not only those who died or were maimed in the war, but also those who were executed or interned during the 25 years of Stalinism?

And lastly, if independence is important to Belarus, and few would argue to the contrary, why don't the dates July 27 (1990) or August 25 (1991) figure more prominently in official commemorations rather than July 3 (1944) or May 9 (1945)? The second date, the declaration of independence, was not even recognized in the period before Belarus had a presidency. Does it represent an unwillingness to break the ties with the Soviet heritage?

The reality is that if Belarus wishes to establish a state that is widely recognized as distinct from Russia, it must take precisely such a step. Remembrance of the wartime victory links it more irrevocably to Russia than any other factor, partly because such memory is so critical to the Putin leadership and its definition of modern Russian identity. The Russia-Belarus Union is often mocked but it symbolizes and perpetuates an existing myth of a common past, linked above all by a common fight against the Nazi invader.

Perhaps that is not entirely fair to President Lukashenka, who has at least tried to create some sort of distinctly Belarusian story to the years 1941-45. But to do so he relied on Soviet traditions and memory creation; and ultimately the narrative, based on a simplistic rendering of events on the Eastern Front, is both unconvincing and retrogressive. Independence occurred in spite of the Soviet state rather than because of it. Perhaps initially it was attained by default rather than mass popular support, but today it is increasingly valued, by all sectors of the population.

Author: David R. Marples is Distinguished University Professor at the University of Alberta, Canada. He published 'Our Glorious Past': Lukashenka's Belarus and the Great Patriotic War in 2014 (ibidem Press, Stuttgart, Germany).

QUOTES

We must never forget that Belarus put up massive resistance to aggressors. Our partisans and underground fighters opened their front of resistance in the first days of the war. They contained the enemy's tremendous force and paralyzed the movement of troops during the rail war and partisan raids, liberated huge territories which can be compared to the territories of a number of European countries from invaders. Almost 1.5 million Belarusian soldiers fought in the Red Army. People from Belarus worked hard in the rear to provide the front with weapons and food

Aliaksandr Lukashenka
July 1, 2015, BelTA

Due to exclusively ideological reasons, the society is being foisted a completely absurd connection of Belarus' liberation from Nazi occupation with the day of independence, the day of the republic, and actually with the day sovereign Belarus was born. Such a somersault calculates with the exclusively low historical culture of the Belarusian society. In my opinion, people view July 3rd rather as a holiday dedicated to the victory over Nazism.

Professor Zachar Šybieka
September 6, 2013, Belarusian Review

VICTOR SHADURSKY: THE KEYS TO IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION ARE IN BELARUS



On May 14th, it was announced that Belarus joined the European Higher Education Area (the Bologna Process). Belarusian Review asked Professor Victor Shadursky, Dean of the International Relations Faculty at the Belarusian State University, to share his views on the opportunities that EHEA accession opens for Belarusian institutions of higher education.

Victor Shadursky: "Belarus' accession to the European Higher Education Area in May 2015 is an extremely positive development. The absence of Belarus among the parties to the Bologna process had negatively affected the image of Belarusian higher education, which has a good reputation in the former Soviet Union (it is worth considering the high rankings of the Belarusian State University and other institutions of higher education). As for the new membership status to the EHEA, I would like to emphasize two aspects:

Firstly, students, teachers and higher education managers all have different expectations of the practical implementation of European standards of higher education in the country.

Students will gain the most benefits, as this process greatly enhances their opportunities for university mobility (simplification of the enrolment procedure for master degree programs, credit transfer for courses taken at foreign universities, etc.).

Teachers will face increased competition within the more rapid dynamics of the educational process. They will be required to update format and content of courses, while their work will be regularly assessed by students.

Education managers will be able to actively develop their contacts with foreign partners. At the same time, they will seek to maintain their dominant influence on decision-making in the sphere of education. However, the results of this intersection of various groups' interests can be accessed only over the course of time.

Secondly, the keys to improving the quality and competitiveness of the national higher education are primarily in Belarus. Without economic growth in the country, improving the financing of the education system and a significant increase in salaries and the social status of teachers and lecturers, any significant achievements in this area are hardly possible."

INFORMATION

The Bologna Process aims to facilitate mobility by providing common tools to ensure that periods of study abroad are recognised. These tools are used to promote transparency in the emerging European Higher Education Area by allowing degree programmes and qualifications awarded in one country to be understood in another. An overarching structure (incorporating these elements) is being implemented through the development of national and European qualifications frameworks, which aim to provide a clearly defined system which is easy for students, institutions and employers to comprehend.

Source: European University Association website (eua.be).

THOUGHTS & OBSERVATIONS

THE ROMANIZATION OF BELARUSIAN: AN UNNECESSARY DUALISM

KIRYL KASCIAN

PRACTICE OF TRANSLITERATION

Belarusian geographical and personal names often appear in news sources, analytical publications, as well as in official and tourist information. However, they lack consistency and uniformity from one publication or author to another. Actually, the aforementioned sources of information usually do not provide any additional explanation why they choose a particular form of spelling. Therefore, it seems reasonable to consult Belarus-focused individuals and collective academic monographs whose authors usually find some space to explain the transliteration used. The available Belarus-related titles in the English language are quite diverse and cover different periods of the country's history. However, some authors depict only certain periods of Belarus' history of the 19th or 20th centuries. Quite often they use Russian or Polish variants of the Belarusian geographical names backing this choice according to the official status of these languages at that time. This approach seems rather logical, as there "is a difference between history and memory, a difference revealed by a careful study of names." It is therefore important to focus on those works which at least partly deal with the post-Soviet independent Belarus.

Generally, the scholars who write about Belarus can be divided along the line of official Belarusian-Russian bilingualism. Thus, there are those scholars who opt for the Belarusian spelling and those who advocate usage of Russian in their works. This choice "is considered by many as a political statement". Nevertheless, scholars use different logic in their decisions and sometimes explain it in the introductory parts of their works. Therefore, it seems useful to quote at least some of them.

Margarita Balmaceda, James Clem and Lisbeth Tarlow in their 2002 book opted for Belarusian, although stressed that "the use of Belarusian itself is difficult since there are competing orthographs which claim centrality and authenticity."

David Marples, author of three books on Belarus, stresses that he tries to use native language versions of place and personal names which is important in the case of Belarus "because of the precarious position of the language in that state."

Andrew Wilson in his *Belarus: the Last European Dictatorship* chose to use Belarusian spellings in order to emphasize Belarus' distinct history, although "transliterat[ing] the unique Belarusian letter 'ў' as 'w' rather than 'u', which is how it sounds and is hopefully clearer for the general reader".

Grigory Ioffe prefers to transliterate Belarusian geographical names from Russian "[taking] guidance from the dominant language usage in the Republic of Belarus".

Ann Lewis called the choice in favor of Russian she made as the editor of book on Belarus in 2002 "a matter of convenience" and further explained that where Belarusian names are familiar to non-specialists, it is usually in the Russian form, and the Russian versions of names are commonly used in academic writings about Belarus both in that country and in the West.

The quotations of the scholars who write on Belarus lead to two conclusions. First, there is no consistency among scholars in using certain standard of transliteration. The choice in favor of either the Belarusian or the Russian language is often determined by the personal choice of the author and alleged convenience/familiarity of the prospective reader. Second, all arguments of the scholars refer to the issues of Belarusian identity and history, actual positioning of the language in the country or as political message, which is linked with the preference of certain transliteration. Obviously, the status of Belarusian and Russian languages as state languages of the Republic of Belarus combined with the nation's Soviet past seems to be the main reason for the entire issue in question. However, none of the cited scholars have directly presented their choice through the prism of the Belarusian legislation on transliteration of geographical and personal names and the practice of its implementation.

ARE TWO DIFFERENT ROMANIZATION STANDARDS NECESSARY?

The analysis of two distinct romanization systems applicable in Belarus towards geographical and personal names demonstrate that they employ different principles of conversion of Belarusian names to the Roman script. The logical question is whether this dichotomy is necessary? If not, which standard should be applied?

On the one hand, prior to their adoption, both the Instructions for transliteration of personal names and the Instructions for transliteration of geographical names had been negotiated and agreed to by different public bodies of the Republic of Belarus. For the Instructions for transliteration of geographical names, these bodies were: State Commitee on Property (issuer of the Instructions), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Internal Affairs, and National Academy of Sciences.

In the case of the Instructions for transliteration of personal names, the public bodies concerned were: Ministry of Internal Affairs (which issued the Instructions) and the Jakub Kolas and Janka Kupala Institute of Language and Literature at the National Academy of Sciences.

This list demonstrates that the adoption of the two romanization systems involved at least two of the same public bodies, namely the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Academy of Sciences.

On the other hand, while for the Instructions for transliteration of geographical names the status of the Russian language in the Republic of Belarus is totally irrelevant, the Instructions for transliteration of personal names consider Belarusian-Russian official bilingualism. In other words, while all the Belarusian geographical names must be romanized from the Belarusian language, in the case of the Belarusian personal names an individual may choose both the transliteration (though, actually the transcription) of the source language (either Belarusian or Russian) and the target language. The latter is deemed by default to be English according to the ICAO transcription rules, though it is not a requirement.

Thus, citizens of the Republic of Belarus are provided with relative freedom of choice how to romanize their own names, being limited only by the 26 basic Roman letters and the apostrophe. At the same time, this limitation seems to create additional obstacles because of the irreversible nature of the *de facto* Anglicized transcription which Belarusian authorities by default apply towards personal names of their citizens. First, although English is becoming a language of universal communication, it has never had any historical presence in Belarus with regard to its impact on the literary standards and traditions of Belarus. Thus, Anglicization was chosen despite the fact that at least four Roman script languages have historical links with the development of the Belarusian language – Czech (its impact on the Belarusian *lacinka*), German, Latin and Polish. Second, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the "recommended" character of the Instructions creates multiple options for transliteration of the same family and/or given names. Therefore, it is not uncommon that for various reasons even close relatives with the same surnames have them differently romanized in their official documents. Third, when combined with the romanization system of geographical names, these different approaches become obvious. In other words, the romanization system of personal names which is currently used by the Belarusian authorities does not contribute to the uniformity and standardization because of its de facto chaotic approach. Moreover, being mechanically imposed by the authorities with the reference to the ICAO standards, the romanization system of personal names currently used in Belarus is neither scientifically-based, nor does it reflect the historical traditions of the local language(s).

Therefore, it seems logical to extend the application of the national system of transliteration of geographical names to the Belarusian personal names in order to achieve a standardized approach based on scientific principles and long-established historical traditions of the languages traditionally present in Belarus. The opportunity for an individual to choose the approach to the romanization of her/his personal name should therefore include such intentionally and historically accurate options.

IMPLEMENTATION: LACK OF CONTROL MECHANISMS

Despite their discrepancy and aforementioned shortcomings, both transliteration systems contain some general rules which are of key importance

with regard to their implementation. Thus, as the Instructions for transliteration of geographical names prescribe,

1. the source language is always Belarusian,
2. the rules for transliteration are standardized as unanimous and invariable, and
3. this system of transliteration is mandatory for all individuals, as well as private companies and public bodies.

The Instructions for the transliteration of personal names

1. provide the room for the choice of transliteration, though limited to the basic Roman letters and the apostrophe, and
2. if an individual has not instructed the authorities how her/his personal name should be transliterated, the source language is always Belarusian.

At the same time, the English versions of the websites of Belarus' public bodies (ranging from the President and ministries to regional and local authorities), state-run media (the telegraph agency BelTA and the official website of the Republic of Belarus designed and supported by it), as well as numerous private companies in the vast majority of cases, disregard the provisions of these transliteration systems and romanize both geographical and personal names from Russian. In other words, these public bodies and private companies massively neglect the provisions of the domestic regulations on the transliteration of geographical and personal names.

Sometimes this ignorance leads to quite absurd situations. For instance, during the games of FC BATE Barysaŭ in the 2014-15 UEFA Champions League group stage games, the discrepancy between the players' names on players' shirts and on television titles could be observed. Allegedly, the names on the shirts were written as they appear in the players' passports whereas the television titles were transliterated from Russian without prior consultation with the correct version of the romanized names of the BATE players. From the formal point of view, this discrepancy can be seen as if designating two distinct persons and not one individual whose name has been transliterated in two different manners. In all cases, this approach violates the existing standards and norms of transliteration.

There are three aspects which can be seen as the reasons for such situations:

1. The state failed to maintain an effective mechanism for the implementation of its own provisions on romanization of the Belarusian geographical and personal names. In other words, it is not clear to what extent the responsible persons at both public bodies and private companies (including translation agencies) are aware of these provisions and of the scope of their applications.
2. The general view on the romanization issues is often erroneously linked with Art. 17 of the Constitution which establishes Belarusian and Russian as being the two official languages in Belarus. However, the issue of romanization of both geographical and personal names belongs to the thematic legislation which establishes a hierarchy between these two languages and specifies how they should be used.
3. Consequently, the state failed to maintain an effective control mechanism which could warn and, if necessary, take to task those who breach the regulations on romanization of geographical and personal names.

As David Marples underlines, the more people make this a habit, the more prestigious the place of the indigenous language will be in Belarus, which "would lead to more respect for the emergent nation". However, it is the state which must take additional measures in order to effectively implement and control its language-related policies.

The issue of romanization is very important here, as it visibly demonstrates the country's distinctiveness to the rest of the world. Moreover, it is important to effectively promote it abroad, so that the authors who write on Belarus-related topics would base their choice on the regulations officially applicable in Belarus and not on their personal choices and/or alleged familiarity of their prospective readers.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The full version of this text has appeared as BR Working Paper #4. This working paper is a result of cooperation between Belarusian Review/The_Point Journal and the Center for Belarusian Studies (Winfield, KS).

A Comparison of the Romanization Systems of Belarusian Geographical and Personal Names According to the Norms of the Belarusian Domestic Law

Letters of the Belarusian Cyrillic Alphabet and their combinations	Romanization of the Belarusian geographical names as required by the Instructions for transliteration of geographical names	Romanization of the Belarusian personal names as recommended by the Instructions for transliteration of personal names
А.а	A, a	A, a
Б, б	B, b	B, b
В. в	V, v	V, v
Г, г	H, h	G, g; Belarusian variant: H, h
Д, д	D, d	D, d
Е, е	Je, je (initially, after vowels, ', ь and ў); ie (after consonants)	E, e (exception – Belarusian variant: ie (after consonants) and Je, je (initially, after vowels, ', ь and ў)
Ё, ё	Jo, jo (initially, after vowels, ', ь and ў); io (after consonants)	E, e (exception – Belarusian variant: io (after consonants) and Jo, jo (initially, after vowels, ', ь and ў)
Ж, ж	Ž, ž	Zh, zh
З, з	Z, z	Z, z
І, і	I, i	I, i
Й, й	J, j	J, j
К, к	K, k	K, k
Л, л	L, l	L, l
М, м	M, m	M, m
Н, н	N, n	N, n
О, о	O, o	O, o
П, п	P, p	P, p
Р, р	R, r	R, r
С, с	S, s	S, s
Т, т	T, t	T, t
У, у	U, u	U, u
Ў, ў	Ŭ, ŭ	W, w
Ф, ф	F, f	F, f
Х, х	Ch, ch	Kh, kh
Ц, ц	C, c	Ts, ts
Ч, ч	Č, č	Ch, ch
Ш, ш	Š, š	Sh, sh
ь	´ (дзь – dź, зь – ź, ль – ĺ, нь – ń, сь – ś, ць – ś)	j + next vowel (the same principle applies to the letter "ъ" included into the Instructions)
Э, э	E, e	E, e
Ю, ю	Ju, ju (initially, after vowels, ', ь and ў); iu (after consonants)	Iu, iu (exception – Belarusian variant: iu (after consonants) and Ju, ju (initially, after vowels,, ', ь and ў)
Я, я	Ja, ja (initially, after vowels, ', ь and ў); ia (after consonants)	Ia, ia (exception – Belarusian variant: ia (after consonants) and Ja, ja (initially, after vowels, ', ь and ў)

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE: 5 YEAR RESULTS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

HANNA VASILEVICH

EDITOR'S NOTE:

This is a shortened version of the text which first appeared in: Bátor, Peter. – Ondrejcsák, Róbert. (eds.): Panorama of global security environment 2014. Center for European and North Atlantic Affairs (CENAA), Bratislava 2015, 672 pp. ISBN 978-80-971124-9-3. The text is reprinted with the permission of CENAA.

EAP BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

The emergence and implementation of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) is linked with the Polish-Swedish proposal within the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), in order to sustain and increase cooperation between the EU and its six eastern neighbours – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In many ways, the ENP has been a subject of heavy criticism due to its framework that brought together a huge range of various countries from Northern Africa, Middle East and Eastern Europe. That is why a specification of EU policies towards its eastern neighbours was thought to become a qualitative upgrade of the ENP (Emerson 2008, 15). The declared goal of the EaP was to bring six participating countries to the creation of a free trade area between them and the EU. Further aims referred to the advancement of cooperation in the field of energy followed by the abolishing of barriers in trade between the participants of the initiative. Finally, the EaP was constructed as a club "that would be loyal to the EU, depend on that community and share the European values" (Polkhov 2008).

The aforementioned loyalty and dependence have been embodied in the formal framework of the EaP. It has been designed by the EU and based on the formula "more-for-more." It means that the countries which show the best performance in conducting democratic reforms are provided with more opportunities and incentives from the EU. At the same time, the bilateral relations of all six countries with the EU have been formalized through the EaP initiative and based on the same formula centered on the Association Agreements (AA) which in each case should also contain parts on the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA) and replace previous Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA). In other words, such a framework implied approximation between each EaP country and the EU when the former were to accept "commitment[s] to 'endeavour to ensure that [their] legislation be gradually made compatible with that of the Community' under the socalled 'approximation clause'" (Petrov 2014, 137). This legislative rapprochement should be based on the three-pillar structure and include spheres of economy, justice and home affairs as well as foreign and security policy (Emerson 2008, 15). Crucial importance in completion of this framework belonged to the EaP countries' membership in the WTO which was set by the EU as a precondition for negotiation of the DCFTA parts of the bilateral Association Agreements (EEAS 2014, 2).

Within this format particular role belonged to Ukraine. On the one hand, it is the biggest EaP country that constitutes approximately 60% of both EaP region's territory and population (SME 2012, 52). On the other hand, the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was thought to become a template for other EaP countries, though taking into account their peculiarities and characteristics (Emerson 2008, 15).

Consequently, this framework implies more or less a standard procedural approach of the EU towards six different countries of the EaP region which in case of their intensions for enhanced relations with the EU thereby had to comply with this EU-designed format in coordination of their bilateral relations. This outcome has a number of implications. The conditionality-based "more-for-more" formula is applied by the EU towards the countries with different geopolitical priorities and alliance choices. Thus, already at the beginning of EaP initiative these six countries had different levels of rapprochement with the EU and different visions of the developments of bilateral relations. Moreover, after the 2014 Russian annexation of the Ukrainian Crimean peninsula, Belarus remains the only EaP country free from any territorial and/or ethnic conflicts, compared to the others, which all include the Russia factor. However, through its design the EaP does not take into account the growing role of Russia in the region embodied by a number of Russian-led regional

alliances. Finally, the EaP format does not offer any clear-cut EU membership perspective to any of its six participants, although it does not rule it out in general. However, it does stipulate that the approximation of the EaP countries with the EU should be achieved through a special EaP mechanism within the ENP. At the same time, as the contents of the consequent EU Presidency Programmes after the launch of the EaP illustrate, there is still no common assessment with regard to the intensity and role of EaP among the EU's foreign policy priorities.

EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE FOR THE REGION BEFORE AND AFTER VILNIUS

The analysis of the emergence and development of the EaP framework requires a close focus on the time factor. As Johns (2013, 158) underlines,

> [w]hile the EU argues on its own webpage that this partnership is fundamentally about trade, it mentions the Russia-Georgia war as a rationale for exerting more infl uence in the region.

This not only brings the Russian factor into the equation but also requires to address the state of bilateral relations of the EaP countries with the EU at the moment when the initiative was about to be launched. The Czech EU Presidency Programme (2009, 24) which inaugurated the EaP provides brief but comprehensive overview of the bilateral relations with individual EaP countries. Thus, it was expected to continue negotiations on a new Ukraine-EU bilateral agreement and to launch similar negotiations with Moldova. With regard to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, it was thought to work "on the conclusion of new, enhanced agreements, deepening relations and cooperation within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership." As for Belarus, initially its participation in the initiative was linked to the policies of the Belarusian government. Nevertheless, the readiness of the EU for gradual development of bilateral relations and constructive dialogue with Belarus was declared.

Consequently, already at its initial stage, the EaP resembled a threetier league measured through the countries' progress in preparing or negotiating prospective bilateral agreements with the Union. The "top league" consisted of Ukraine and Moldova which at that time had already started negotiations or were about to do so. The "second league" included three countries of Southern Caucasus which were less advanced in the development of their relations with the EU compared to Moldova and Ukraine, however had demonstrated their willingness for a deeper cooperation. The "third tier" contained Belarus which was the only EaP country which lacks its own PCA with the EU (EEAS 2014, 5).

Within five years of the Eastern Partnership this situation somewhat changed due to the reconfi gurations in development of the EaP countries' relations with the EU. The Lithuanian EU Presidency Programme (2013, 17) which culminated with the EaP Summit in November 2013 in Vilnius may serve as a good benchmark of this. Initially, the signing of the Ukraine-EU Association Agreement, including its DCFTA part, was seen as the highlight of the Summit. In the cases of Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, the EU strived to complete negotiations on similar agreements before the Summit. With regard to Azerbaijan, "[t]angible progress in negotiations" was expected. Specifi cs of the Belarus-EU relations were not covered by this Programme. Thus, the progress in negotiating the Association Agreement was seen as the main determinant in the bilateral relations between the EU and its eastern neighbours. This status quo also predetermined the public interest with regard to these countries prior and during the Vilnius Summit. Both prior and during the Summit the highest attention was focused on Ukraine, then on Armenia, Georgia and Moldova, while Azerbaijan and Belarus drew the least attention. Such logic complied with the "more-for-more" conditionality formula applied by the EU in its relations with the EaP countries. At the same time,

> should the most "pro-European" statement with regard to the development of their relations and readiness for further tangible progress in negotiations with the European Union come from Azerbaijan or Belarus, it would hardly exceed public attention to the "top tier" (Kascian and Vasilevich 2013, 2).

However, real developments of the situation turned out to be different than expected by the European Union. First, Armenia refused to initiate an Association Agreement and declared its intention to join the Russianled Customs Union (Gotev 2013). During the Summit, against the background of the

announced decision of the Ukrainian authorities led by the then president Viktor Yanukovych to postpone signing of the Association Agreement (largely perceived by the general public as a covert rejection of the document), the initiation of the Association Agreements with Georgia and Moldova could be seen only to a very limited degree as a success of the EU foreign policy.

Moreover, the Yanukovych decision held far reaching consequences both for Ukraine and for the entire region: Yanukovych's regime was overthrown, Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula, and ongoing armed confrontations between Ukrainian troops and pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine produced numerous deaths of both civilians and combatants.

The subsequent signing of the Association Agreements by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on June 27, 2014 reframed the EaP countries to two tiers. The top one was formed by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine which have signed the Association Agreements, whereas the "second tier" consisted of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus which due to various reasons have not done so thus far.

Considering the aftermath of the Vilnius Summit, a number of issues should be stressed. First, as of now the EU-designed EaP framework has proven to be attractive only for three out of six EaP countries. Secondly, the EU-EaP rapprochement was closely observed by Russia which became one of the main international actors vis-à-vis the post-Vilnius EaP developments, particularly in the case of Ukraine. Thirdly, all three countries which signed the Association Agreements are subjects of territorial confl icts involving Russia. Considering these factors, it is important to address 3 particular issues – how the EaP is viewed in comparison with other regional integration initiatives, what is the role of Russia in the region with regard to the EaP, and why the EaP integration framework seems as not the most attractive alliance option for the other EaP countries.

COMPETING INITIATIVES?

In practice the Eastern Partnership initiative evolved as the fi rst attempt of the EU to see its six eastern neighbours outside the Russian dimension of policies, though Russia itself refused to be a part of the EaP framework. In other words, as Delcour and Wolczuk (2013, 190) argue,

> [t]he Eastern Partnership entailed a move from the soft law approach based on persuasion and assistance to a comprehensive, binding and detailed legal framework structuring relations between the EU and its Eastern neighbours. … [W]hile lacking a membership perspective the Eastern Partnership nevertheless aims to anchor participating countries in the EU's 'sphere of infl uence' in the legal framework of the Association Agreement with DCFTA.

Despite the lack of clear membership perspective, for instance, the Association Agreement with Moldova contains a reference to Article 49 of the Lisbon Treaty which provides that any European state may apply to the EU membership (Kasčiūnas and Keršanskas 2014, 10).

At the same time, "Russia sees the Eastern Partnership as the EU attempting to become involved in a part of the world that it sees as their sphere of infl uence" (Johns 2013, 158). Consequently, it was the EaP that triggered Russia to develop own integration projects which also contain a legally binding framework (Delcour and Wolczuk 2013, 191). Thus, promotion of both EU- and Russia-led integration frameworks provides grounds for experts to speak about them as competing initiatives.

European integration, though in its limited EaP format, and the Russianled Customs Union/Eura sian Economic Union (CU/EAU) are presented as mutually exclusive options. Within the EU perspective, the framework of Association Agreements excludes participation of the EaP countries in the Russia-driven regional economic projects (EEAS 2014, 2-3). At the same time, any competition requires some kind of symmetry which is quite vague when it comes to the comparison of the two projects.

Firstly, while any Russian-led integration project in the post-Soviet space is per se dominated by Russia, the EU is a club in which a number of countries such as Germany, France or the UK counterbalance each other, preventing the others from being a dominant power in the Union. Secondly, contrary to the lack of clear EU membership perspective for any EaP country, the Russia-driven integration projects ensure full and comprehensive membership in the CU/EAU which provides certain possibilities to infl uence decisions within these organizations. At the

same time, "in contrast to the EU, [Russia] is not regarded as a credible source of modernization through rule-based economic integration" (Delcour and Wolczuk 2013, 180). However, it is Russia that uses predominantly traditional "hard power" approach to convince its neighbours to follow a post-Soviet integration path (Zhurzhenko 2014, 21) while the impact of its "soft power" remains "small compared to Russia's image as a country which uses force to promote its interests" (Kobzova, Popescu and Wilson 2011, 93). Nevertheless, despite such images of itself in the neighbourhood, Russia has significant room to exploit dependencies of the EaP countries on it in the economic, political or security areas which enables the Kremlin "to alter the costs and benefits associated with the economic integration of these countries with the EU" (Delcour and Wolczuk 2013, 180).

All these factors combined imply competing integration projects vis-àvis the general publics in the EaP societies. In reality,

> The Russian approach can be described as that of "the rich older brother," as it implies a central Russian role in the design of its integration project and readiness to work here and now. In its turn, the EU approach can be characterized as "the high society club," which means that in order to get full access to it, a prospective candidate has to reach a certain status first and then the decision on accession can be made (Kascian and Vasilevich 2013, 2).

At the same time these qualitatively different approaches of the two major regional players are presented to the societies on the equal footing through various opinion push polls conducted in these countries (e.g. IISEPS in Belarus or Razumkov Centre in Ukraine) that measure geopolitical choices of the population between the EU and Russia/CU/ EAU. The pro-European geopolitical option is usually referred to as "joining the EU" or similarly, even though the issue of accession of any EaP country to the European Union is off the agenda both in mid- and long-term perspectives. Even though, there is no data available on whether the respective population in the EaP country is aware of the lack of the membership perspective, it is obvious that such opinion polls are in fact comparing the two scenarios – virtual EU full-fledged integration and real cooperation with Russia.

As a result, there is a significant divergence of the two integration formats. In case of the Russian-led CU/EAU the full-fledge membership perspective is clear from the very beginning of the integration process, whereas in case of the EaP the final benefit of the integration process is uncertain and blurred which makes the EaP country following such a path to face virtually never-ending process with numerous obstacles and potentially unknown outcomes. Moreover, the aforementioned "self-perception of the EU combined with the lack of clear membership perspective for the EaP countries largely complicates what is referred to as "a European perspective to the region" (Kascian and Vasilevich 2013, 2)

"RUSSIAN WORLD" VIS-À-VIS EUROPEANIZATION

The perception of the EaP countries within their own sphere of influence by the Russian political elites in recent years has obtained additional elements that go beyond the countries' common Soviet past. This common past still largely remains an important element for the social life in both Russia and the EaP countries and is interpreted by authors like Grigory Ioffe (2012) as "cultural preconditions" that in some cases, like the Belarusian one, allegedly determine the country's geopolitical alliances in favour of the pro-Russian choice. At the same time, such an interpretation fits into the logic of the abovementioned opinion polls which forces their respondents to make a choice between participation of their country in the EU or Russian integration initiatives. Such a framework does not answer the question why these countries themselves made certain choices, whereas the own economic and political interests of the EaP countries is largely omitted as irrelevant. As a result, this "either-or" vision

> treats [each EaP country] merely as an object of international politics but not its subject, limiting the country's capacity for maneuver to taking an obligatory decision whether to ally with Russia or the EU (Kascian, 2013).

At the same time, the shared political culture among the Soviet-formed older generation of the elites significantly simplifies relations between both Russia and the EaP countries on the one hand, and between the EaP countries themselves on the

other hand.

Moreover, the expansion of Russian influence towards its immediate neighbourhood has been accompanied by the concept of the so-called "Russian world" (Russian: *russkiy mir*) which has become a dominant doctrine of the Russian state and the Russian Orthodox Church. The application of this doctrine explains Russia's claims on enhancing its linkage to the neighbouring territories and is rooted to historical and cultural foundations of the Russian state. According to Tishkov (2008, 416), within this doctrine the notion 'world' means "a trans-state and transcontinental community which is united by its affiliation to a particular state and the loyalty to its culture." Thus, in this framework special attention belongs to the role of the Russian language. According to Vladimir Putin (2007), it should be promoted as the language of the historic brotherhood of nations and international communication for a community entitled the "Russian world" which is much broader than Russia itself. The Kremlin policies with this regard are backed by the Russian Orthodox Church which declares Belarus, Russia and Ukraine as the direct heirs of the Kyivan Rus and the core of the "Russian world" (DECR Communication Service 2010). Moreover, the Patriarch Kirill of Moscow (2009) has repeatedly stressed that:

> the Church is called Russian not on the ground of ethnicity. This designation indicates that the Russian Orthodox Church performs the pastoral mission among the peoples which take Russian spiritual and cultural tradition as the basis of their national identity, or, at least, as a substantial portion thereof.

Even though, the sovereignty of the states is not questioned and this space is declared not to be based on any hierarchy in relationship between the countries in question, it is obvious that this vision promotes a Russocentric view on the history and culture of the neighboring states. Within the EaP region, the potential impact of the "Russian world" doctrine is highest in Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine which all belong to the canonic territory of the Moscow Patriarchy. Particular symbolic role with this regard belongs to the city of Kyiv which is viewed by proponents of the "Russian world" doctrine as its cradle.

Thus, in its policies towards the immediate neighborhood, Russia started applying ideological constructs which are rooted to the foundations of history, culture and language. Combined with the significant presence of Russian media in the region and their quite effective work in promoting of the Russian vision, as well as numerous options available for Russia to exploit the dependences of the EaP countries on it in economy, politics and security areas, these options constitute important elements for the promotion of the Russo-centric doctrines in the Russia's immediate neighborhood and strengthen the countries' ties with Russia.

Hence, while measuring the effectiveness of the EU policies in the region within the EaP or any other framework, it is often argued that the focus should be put on "break[ing] the link between corrupt elites in Russia and other post-Soviet states, undermining the very notion of the "post-Soviet space" as a coherent geographical and political expression (Maknoff 2012, 289). However, such endeavors are virtually impossible without more active reference by the EU to the common historical and cultural foundations which tie the EaP countries with common European heritage and thus go far beyond the limits of the values promoted by the EU in its eastern neighborhood. This is particularly relevant in the cases of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine and compatible with their national historical narratives, which in each case represents a sort of counterbalance of the Russo-centric view on the region's history.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the EaP initiative was thought to provide qualitative changes in the relations of the EU with its eastern neighborhood particularly through case-by-case approach towards individual countries. At the same time, the design of these policies measured through Association Agreements merely illustrates use of the one-size-fits-all approach by the EU. Furthermore, the "more-for-more" conditionality formula does not take into account geopolitical choices and economic ties of the EaP countries. Moreover, such "rational" approach fails to consider historical peculiarities which influence not only previous alliances but also determine institutional approaches and the behavior of officials in the EaP countries who in many cases are representatives of the Soviet-formed nomenclature.

Another set of the EaP inconsistencies is yet again linked with the Russian factor. On the one hand, Russia itself refused to be a part of the EaP framework. However, such a decision by no means meant that Russia would not pursue its interests and historical claims in the region. Thus, the EaP failed to take into account the rising and increasingly enhanced ideas of the "Russian world" doctrine pursued by the Kremlin in cooperation with the media and the Russian Orthodox Church. The failure to consider these factors resulted in the situation whereby almost all EaP countries are confronted with frozen confl icts on their territories. These conflicts have the potential to develop, which could lead to the destabilization of the situation in each EaP country in question, as has been illustrated by the recent developments in Ukraine, with special emphasis on Russia's role in this process.

Hence, after five years of its implementation, the potential added value of the EaP was largely diminished due to the EU's somewhat excessive demands as exhibited by the "high society club", the marginal benefi ts of the EaP due to the lack of clear membership perspective, as well as incorrect assessment of the historical background and geopolitical status of the EaP region at large.

QUOTES

The Eastern Partnership is not a beauty contest between Russia and the European Union. But, let me be frank, beauty does count. If Russia was a bit softer, more charming, more attractive, perhaps it wouldn't have to compensate its shortcomings by its destructive and aggressive bullying tactics against its neighbours

Donald Tusk

May 21, 2015, consilium.europa.eu

To reconsolidate the increasingly fragmented Eastern Partnership we also need to put the economy at its heart. This would enhance our resilience and would ensure sustainability of any modernization efforts. We would welcome more focus on such areas of cooperation as trade, economic development, connectivity, including transport and energy

Uladzimir Makei

May 22, 2015, BelTA

FORUM

"BELARUS WAS HERE, THE BELARUSIAN PROVINCE"

MIROSŁAW JANKOWIAK

Bus number 7559, made by the Minsk Automobile Plant, drove quickly through the hilly and sometimes sandy road between Rēzekne and Dagda. I approached the driver and asked in Latvian how far it was to Dagda, but I did not understand his answer. I asked again and the result was the same. Regardless of age, everyone speaks only Latgalian here. Two grannies with scarves on their heads discuss something in Latgalian so rapidly that I catch only the words which are similar to Latvian, Polish, Russian or Belarusian (Latgalian dialects and the Latvian language contain about 1,500 words borrowed from the Slavic languages). Two 20-year old youngsters dressed in trendy jeans and T-shirts were talking to each other in Latgalian about their studies in Riga.

My knowledge of the Latvian language was not very useful. I thought for a minute. I am in Latvia, but as if in another country, Baltic, but not entirely Latvian. I looked through the photos I had taken throughout the day – a monument "United for Latvia" (the symbol of unity of Latvia and Latgale in Rēzekne), a monument to Soviet soldiers, the inscription "Glory to Labor 1970" made of red bricks on a house, an almost new tractor "Belarus" working in a field, and a memorial plaque from Indra with the inscription, "In 1940 ten border guards were deported from here to Siberia. The Latvian border is sacred!" (In addition to "typical" Latvian surnames, there are also names such as Birnbaums or Laŭrynovič). Further photos depict an abandoned synagogue in Ludza, a restored Plater castle, the so-called Polish cemetery in Krāslava with a monument to the Poles who, in 1920, together with Latvians, liberated Latgale from the Soviets. These photos complement the picture of Latgale in my head.

Latgale is a sort of borderland among borderlands. It is one of the most complex and diverse regions of Europe, where different peoples, ethnicities,

religions, cultures and languages collide – Latgalians and Latvians, Poles and Belarusians, Russian and Ukrainians, Jews and Germans, Catholics, Orthodox, Lutherans and Old Believers. The Latgalian territory passed from one ruler to another – Kryvičians, Germans, Poles, Swedes, Russians (tsarist and Soviet) have all controlled this region. In such circumstances the Latgalian ethnicity, culture and language were formed, though Latgale has never been an independent state. Throughout their difficult history, Latgalians faced decades of Polonization and later, more than 200 years of Russification. There have also been strong Latvian influences here (during the interwar period and after 1991). Latgalians preserved their identity, culture, language and strong attachment to their territory. However, this does not prevent them from considering themselves Latvian citizens. Latgale differs from the "real" Latvia in terms of mentality, customs, traditions, and even architecture. Latgalian language (along with the indigenous Liv language) is protected by Latvian law.[1]

Soon I started observing many similarities between Latgale and Belarus, as well as between Latgalian and Belarusian dialects which have survived despite numerous unfavorable conditions. Immediately I asked myself the question: what is the phenomenon of Belarusianness? Is it about permanent "localness" which has survived all "aliens" who have passed through their lands or something else?.. It also applies to Latgalians and their language. The first Latgalian book is Evangelia Toto Anno 1753. There are Latgalian textbooks, radio and TV programs.

Latgalian Belarusians represent an indigenous population of Latvia, like local Poles or Russian Old Believers. Apart from Kryvičian-Baltic trade contacts in the Middle Ages, Belarusian presence on these lands (I speak here of a large number of people) began at least in the 1860s. The best time, both for the development of the Belarusian community in Latvia and for Latgalian identity was the interwar period, especially the 1920s. Two Belarusian theaters, press ("Haspadar", "Na čužynie", "Naša dolia", "Holas bielarusa", etc.), education (there were approximately 40 schools and four grammar schools), numerous associations and organizations... Latgalians also did not waste time. ABC-books for children (incl. Roman Catholic) in the Latgalian language were printed starting in the middle of the 18th century in Rositten (now: Rēzekne), Dorpat (now: Tartu), Vilna, Dünaburg (now: Daugavpils), Riga, or Tilsit (now: Sovetsk). In the interwar period Latgalian books were also published in Leningrad (now: St. Petersburg), Pskov, Moscow and even in Novosibirsk.

While searching for Belarusian dialects and Belarusian identity, I traveled most of Latgale, the southern part of the Pskov region (Nevel and Sebezh districts) and north-eastern Lithuania. Belarusian language features still reach the border defined by Rittich and Karski. The language has remained but the identity is being slowly lost. In terms of language (the northern group of Belarusian dialects) and history (Viciebsk province), the same people live on all four sides of the border. In the northern part of Belarus, all consider themselves Belarusians. In the southern part of the Pskov region, Belarusian schools did not exist. As a result, all locals say that "only Russians live here, there are no Belarusians", although official statistics show that a century ago Belarusians constituted more than half of the local population. A similar situation can be observed in northeastern Lithuania (in the southern part it is different). In the areas where many Lithuanian schools exist along with Polish schools, it is difficult to find someone with Belarusian identity. In Latgale, many of my interlocutors from Indra and Pierdruja parishes went to Belarusian schools that existed here before the war. I asked about their ethnicity. And I often heard the proud answer "a Belarusian, indeed. Belarus was here, the Belarusian province". They sincerely say that in their childhood they went to Belarusian schools, read Belarusian ABC-books and newspapers, and even attended Belarusian plays staged in Daugavpils. Today there are only memories about the interwar period. But could the myth of the Belarusian province last long? Without financial support and primarily Belarusian education, the identity will be lost quietly to people themselves. So far, "local" Belarusians and "local" Latgalians still exist in this forgotten corner of the Earth.

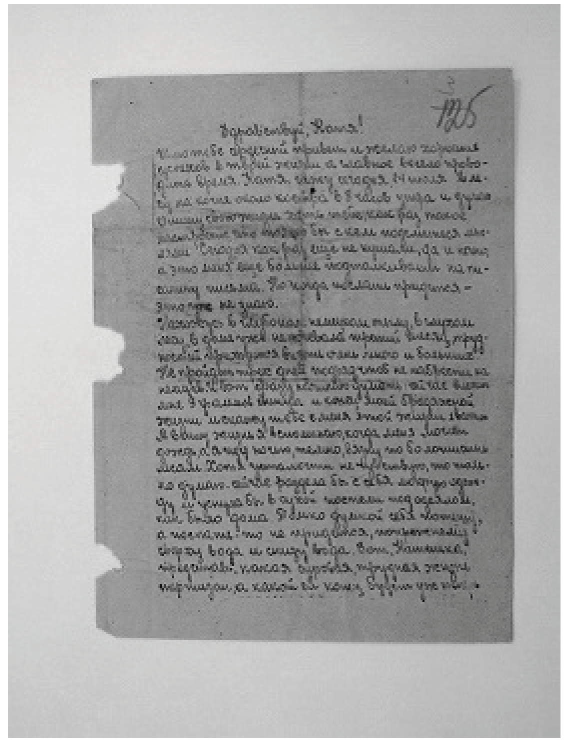
REMARKS:

[1] Latvian Language Law (Art. 3, para 4) prescribes that "[t]he State shall ensure the maintenance, protection and development of the Latgalian written language as a historic variant of the Latvian language".

HISTORY & CULTURE

GUERILLA WARFARE – A HOPELESS BUSINESS?

LEONID SMILOVITSKY



Здравствуй, Катя!

One of the advantages of the historian's profession is not only the opportunity to first discover a rare archival document, but also the ability to assess and comment on it. Knowing the background of a phenomena, its historical milieu and the subsequent chain of events, a scholar distinguishes the important from the nonessential, separates major from minor, sees typical and unique aspects. In contrast to journalism, academic science is less prone to advocacy, as it studies certain phenomena fundamentally and does not accept hasty assessments.

In this regard, I want to share with readers a unique document discovered last summer in Minsk. While working on the project "Unclaimed memory", I have been searching for letters and diaries from 1939 to 1945. I ended up at the Museum of Jewish History and Culture of Belarus. Examining archive folders, I suddenly discovered a document (f. 2, op. 1, d. 1.) which touched a nerve; I was struck by its sincerity and frankness. It was a letter of an unknown partisan to her friend Katya.

Recently I was analyzing my findings in Jerusalem and thought that the 70th anniversary of the Allied Powers' great victory of over Nazism is an appropriate occasion to introduce this document to a wider audience.

Hello, Katya!

I send my cordial greetings to you and wish you much success in your life, and most importantly to have fun. Katya, today is July 14th and at 8 am I am sitting in the woods on a hillock near the fire and thinking that I will describe my life at least to you, as my current mood is such that I would like to share my thoughts. Today we have not eaten yet; there is nothing to eat, and it pushes me even more to this scribbling. I do not known when it will be possible to send this letter.

I am in the deep German rear in the deep woods, it is the third month since I have slept at home. At least once in each three days we come across Germans. And I immediately start thinking: now I will get nine grams of lead and that will end my vagrancy; and I should tell you, I've had enough of this life.

I recall your life when the rain wets me and I go at night in darkness and bog in marshy forests. Although I do not feel tired, I wish now to take off my wet clothes and fall asleep in a dry bed under a blanket, as it was at home. I comfort myself with this thought, but I should not sleep – there is water both above and below.

Katya, just imagine how harsh and hard is the partisans' life, and its end is too obvious already now – we all die in the forest slums. I was once wounded in battle, but now I have recovered. I was a machine gunner then, and now it is the third month as I go on to scout the German rear, I have to see many things. Well, actually the life of a guerrilla is "either thick or empty", we either have nothing, or we eat honey, butter, meat and any other things, or we live just on mushrooms, berries and water without salt. There was a case when for 17 days we could not leave the woods, and we consumed only mushrooms and berries.

Katya, do not believe blabbers, being a guerrilla warfare is a hopeless business. My only desire is to do away with my partisan life and stay alive, and I don't need anything else. I often think about my dear mother, every hour I recall her. If we don't meet again in my life, what a pity it would be for mother. And if

we see each other, I will reach for my mother and not let her go. I would spend all my life with my mother. I do not need to tell you a lot, you know well how to live without a mother. Katya, when you get this letter, give me your answer immediately. Write how you live, what's new with you and how you have lived in Nikolaev under the Germans. Write everything.

Say hello to all Sadovnikovs, Valyunovs and everybody else. I saw Tolya two months ago. Well, there is nothing more to write. Katya, I suggest you never link your destiny with the partisans' life!

COMMENT

The document debunks a myth of the partisan movement during the Soviet-German war which still exists in the public mind. These were years of deadly conflict when the fate of a single member or, as it is commonly said "a little man", was not taken into account. Today we know the enormous cost of war and huge numbers of its victims. Being sophisticated, today we express great interest in the life of the little man at war. We try out how he/she perceived the war, how he/she fought (or did not fight), what drove him/her. Over the years, universal values quite naturally start dominating, obscuring the general confrontation of the warring sides.

Only the first two pages of the letter survived. However, even these two pages, written in a neat schoolgirl handwriting, produce so many questions, trigger so much emotion, feelings, cause so many analogies. They do not let a reader be indifferent, making us think and re-evaluate the inner world of a common person at war. The letter is not intended for publicity. It keeps a great emotional charge, gives scope for analysis and helps to realize how an everyperson viewed and understood himself/herself at war, how he/she looked for a way out, how he/she understood others and saw his/her future.

Most likely, it was a young girl, no older than 20 years, who joined the partisan forces as a volunteer on her own. She had no idea what awaited her there. When all unimaginable difficulties of the partisan life were dumped on her fragile shoulders, she repeatedly regretted the decision which doomed her to these hardships. For elders who sent the girl to the woods, it was primarily a fighting unit. They were obliged to perform tasks and could be written off immediately, if the circumstances required.

In this letter we do not find anything about the need to fight against the enemy. There is nothing about right and wrong in this war, or about how one should sacrifice one's life for the common good. There are no arguments and vows to the homeland, the people, the Party, Comrade Stalin – all these blind, not spiritualized characters (dogmas, stereotypes, etc.) that might blur eyes and affect minds, make a person a fanatic and throw him/her into the fire. Instead, we read a letter filled with the details of an unprepared person thrown into the hardships of war. The person seeks how to survive. This lust for life is typical for a young person full of plans and hopes, whose life has just begun, but is ready to end at any moment.

An unknown partisan shares with her friend Katya what she lacks and what she hopes for. The risk of death is obvious and waits at every turn. We read in the letter: my life can end and I could get my nine grams of lead. There is evidence that the preparation of the saboteurs sent to the enemy's rear was general in its nature, without a clear understanding of the ultimate goal. The author clearly shows this by using the term „guerrilla warfare" (partizanshchina) and not „partisan war." A young person, especially a girl, was of course not ready for that. We do not know how this partisan would behave if arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo. Would she keep military secrets or betray her companions? And if this happened, to what extent should she be blamed for that?

Apparently, the letter would be delivered through a convoy messenger – from hand to hand, avoiding military censorship and ordinary postal services. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the frankness and undisguised description of the difficulties of partisan life provided in this letter to the Soviet rear.

Beyond this text we leave the discussion of whether the Soviet-German war with its millions of victims and unimaginable damages was needed. The just nature of the anti-Nazi struggle is an issue which is settled once and for all. It is unquestioned and is not a subject of discussion.

We are talking about the fate of a little man at war. This life is like a match, it should flare up and go out, but manage to hold the flame needed for Victory. This is the primary concern today. 70 years after the war's end, everybody who reads such a do-

cument inevitably puts himself/herself in the place of our heroine. The reader is looking for an answer, what would he/she do in this situation? In addition, the conventional perception of that distant war, the partisan movement, the belief and determination of an ordinary participant in warfare are changing. Reflections on the fragility of human life at war and the numbers of victims put on the altar of Victory, make people relive what happened once and for all and what allegedly does not affect us today.

Despite the lack of archival information on the document's origin, its author's name and the place where the described events took place, there is no doubt about its authenticity. The letter develops the unpopular for many postwar years point of view of what people in the German rear thought. This could not be loudly spoken and particularly committed to paper. In the Soviet reality there was only one truth about the war, constructed on the principle of „us" and „them." It is known that questions of patriotism were not challenged in the Soviet Union. Moreover, they could not be interpreted in a different way. A new generation of people not related to the war had to be born and raised in order to understand these events impartially. There had to be a completely new spiritual atmosphere, free from the domination of predetermined benchmarks. There should be a country which maintains its relations with the outside world on new principles and interprets historical events from the perspective of moral values rather than of military expediency.

Soviet historiography avoided discussion of the cost of the Victory. This letter is not the only evidence of this kind (this fact does not undermine its significance). The inconvenient truth about the war was revealed by Vasil Bykau, Yakov Shepetinsky, Irina Ehrenburg. Such testimonies are ruthless in content and treble in tone. They stir up the public today and will arouse it tomorrow, leaving the next generation of people indifferent. This truth cannot withdraw into the shadows as long as humanity is able to think and empathize in order to know the cost of today.

This evidence is supranational. It has no reference to Belarusians, Jews, Poles, Russians... No nation is immune from war and from how people behave in time of disaster.

In the document we do not find descriptions of violence and cruelty, massacres of civilians, manifestations of sadism, evidence of villages burned with their inhabitants, stories about shooting pits filled with piles of dead bodies. The author cannot be accused of cowardice, betrayal or a desire to give up the fight. She continues to perform her mission directives. Her new task (reconnaissance, information gathering about the enemy) might seem an improvement. It was not direct armed confrontation with the enemy, when yesterday's civilians fight professional military (i.e. German soldiers). This task implied walking, looking, listening and analyzing. There were many former urban dwellers, hungry and restless, who roamed the roads. In this regard, a scout did not face immediate danger. Failure was possible if some of the arrested implicated him/her (an ambush in a safe house) or occupation authorities questioned the authenticity of documents.

However, this letter is neither a cry of despair, nor a scream of horror. It is rather an argument as to what was, is and will be with a tired person who still possesses vital juices. The hope that in favorable circumstances all could change for the better, has not yet been extinguished. Through this letter we communicate with a person who has seen death, thought about it and is internally ready for it.

Before 1991, this letter could have been regarded as an example of cowardice, anti-patriotism, weak will, lack of faith in victory, or as evidence of the personality's collapse. How many people faced doubts while deciding for themselves on which side they would be? Would they have the strength to survive and rebuild after the war's end?

We have the right to speak about a whole generation of youth (born in 1923-1925), most of whom did not return from the war. The survivors had to adjust to civilian life. This task was enormously difficult in a closed society like the Soviet Union. The communal dominated over the individual, while human values were not taken into account. There was a world of distorted reality to which the post-war generation had to adapt. All this affected the interpretation of history. People saw and felt one thing, while speaking and writing another. In this situation the person's fault becomes inevitable and leaves its mark on awareness of the past. Under such circumstances, it became impossible to explain many things, although there was the need for it.

AGAIN ABOUT SKARYNA IN PADUA: ATTENDEES

VOLHA SHUTAVA

PERSONALITIES AND INTRIGUES

The motives behind Francysk Skaryna‘s arrival to the University of Padua can largely be explained by the Europe-wide fame of its Faculty of Medicine. But was it the only factor which attracted a young doctor of arts and magister of medicine to Padua? What other circumstances could affect his decision or, on the other hand, was it his stay in Padua that gave impetus to get involved in book printing activities? In the absence of sources we can only guess on the personal motives of Skaryna‘s arrival to Italy. However, the documents of his Paduan period still provide us with some ‘material traces‘ which could probably help us to better understand Skaryna‘s biography.

The personalities who were in touch with Skaryna during his stay in Padua can actually be these ‚traces‘. We refer to the names of those who attended Skaryna‘s exams in Padua in order to analyze this audience on the basis of the archival records of the University of Padua and the Paduan Episcopal Curia (according to the texts verified in *Acta graduum academicorum*).

As for the names of Skaryna‘s exams attendees in Padua, the situation seems to be rather paradoxical. Already in 1970 Vitaŭt Tumaš published quite a perfect translation of Skaryna‘s examination texts (Braha 1970, 66-77) which feature the names and positions of the attendees. Yet, the Belarusian historiography is dominated by a "conventional" translation, in which these "details" are rather vague (Daraškievič 1988, 70; Šamiakin 1990). For example, all translations refer to a certain "Mr. Paolo Zabarella and bishop of Argos (in Belarusian: *biskup Argelijski*)" which is twice inaccurate. First, this is the same person without any "and". Second, the form "*Argelijski*" does not denote his affiliation with the diocese of Argos.

The Annex to this article contains the full text of Skaryna‘s documents from the *Acta graduum academicorum*. The following list provides the names of all attendees of Skaryna‘s exams mentioned in these documents. Their names are indexed by the order of their appearance and the roles of these personalities during the exams.

1. Thadei Mussati (art. et med. doct. d. mag. vice-prioris),

Sub promotoribus suis art. et med. doctoribus dominis magistris:

2. Francisco de Noali (Franciscus, Francisco de Novali),
3. Francisco de Este (Franciscus Estensi),
4. Hieronimo a Mulo (Hieronimus a Mullo),
5. Bartholomeo Barisono (Bartholomeus Barisonus),
6. Hieronimo (Hieronimus) de Urbino

Nomina doctorum qui interfuerunt sunt:

7. Bartholomeus a Volta,
8. Nicolaus de Noali,
9. Aurelius Boneto,
10. Hieronimus Rubeus,
11. Bartholomeus de S. Vito - rev. d. (reverendus dominus),
12. Hieronimus Mariperto,
13. Antonius de Soncino,
14. Marcus Antonius de Ianua,
15. Iacobus de Curte - d. presbiter,
16. Hieronimus de Cathaneis,
17. Baptista a Galta,
18. Aurelius Boneto,
19. Franciscus Porcelinus,
20. Carolus de Ianua,
21. Paulus a Sole,
22. Petrus de Noali,
23. Andreas de Aliotis,
24. Marcus-Antonius de Ianua,
25. Cristophorus a Lignamine

Coram

26. d.d. Paulo Zabarella – ep. Argolisensi,
27. d. d. Sixti – tituli S. Petri ad Vincula presbiteri cardinalis S. Romane eccl. vicecancellarii et ecc. Paduane perpetui administratoris – comitisque Saccensis ac. – Studii – Paduani cancellarii apostolici suffraganei

In asistentia

28. Francisci Fumanelli de Verona – art. et med. doct. d. mag. univ. artistarum vicerector,

Testes:

29. Alovisius Zuchatus Tarvisinus – art. doctoris domini magistri,

30. Daniel de Foroiulio Patavinus,

31. Michael Zambonus q. d. Iacobi civis Venetus – art. scholares domini,

32. Gaspar de Gabrielis f. d. Petri civis Padue,

33. d. Valerius de Largis –cler. Paduanus (clericus).

Thus, we know the names of at least 33 persons affiliated with Skaryna's stay in Padua. In addition, an analysis of the Acta graduum academicorum texts provides us with an opportunity to clarify the translation as to the names of the persons who attended Skaryna's exams.

For example, the specification of the translation of Skaryna's personal examination (November 9, 1512) from the archival records of the University of Padua and the Paduan Episcopal Curia sheds light on the presence of two such famous personalities as "Paolo Zabarella, bishop of Argos" and "Dr. Sisto, cardinal and priest of the titular Church of Saint Peter in Chains".

This phrase can be translated from Latin as follows:

In the presence of Dr. Paolo Zabarella - bishop of Argos; and Dr. Sixtus – abbot of the titular Church of Saint Peter in Chains, cardinal of the vice-chancellery of the Roman Church and permanent head of the Paduan Church – Committee of Sacco (Piove di Sacco, a municipality in Italy in the Province of Padua), a suffragan bishop of the Paduan apostolic chancellery.

Further searches show that at the time Skaryna's defence Paolo Zabarella, doctor of theology and a member of the Order of Saint Augustine, was the bishop of Argos (from 1504); in 1513 he was appointed bishop of Paros (archdiocese of Naxos in Greece (Richard 1949, 233) and remained in that post until his death in 1519 (Eubel and van Gulik 1923, 117, 254).[1] Zabarella was famous as a deeply religious talented theologian, bibliophile and a man of arts (Ossinger 1763, 782). It was also Paolo Zabarella, bishop of Argos, who in February 1512 (i.e. eight months before Skaryna's doctoral exam) had served a ‚chosen' priest to confirm a miracle of the bleeding crucifix made by Donatello for *Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Servi* in Padua. Zabarella was entrusted to collect ‚blood' from the face and the right side of a two-meter figure of the crucified Christ into special bottle (Ruffini 2008, 22-49). These miracles maintained the milieu of the Europe's life in the times of Skaryna. They attached great importance in the Middle Ages and especially the Renaissance, as they made a great impression on the population. As Vitaŭt Tumaš observes, Paolo Zabarella's fame was probably the main reason to distinguish his name in the records related to Skaryna's exams as ‚the most honorable among the attendees to be mentioned first' (Braha 1970, 53).



Sisto Franciotti Gara Della Rovere (1473 – 1517)

The next attendee of Skaryna's doctoral exams is Dr. Sixtus, abbot of the titular Church of Saint Peter in Chains, cardinal of the vice-chancellery of the Roman Church and permanent head of the Paduan Church (Committee of Sacco), a suffragan bishop of the Paduan apostolic chancellery. His full name is Sisto Franciotti Gara Della Rovere (1473 – 1517). Dr. Sixtus was a nephew of Pope Julius II and a grand-nephew of Pope Sixtus IV. A cardinal priest of the titular Church (i.e. a church in Rome assignable only to the cardinal priests) Saint Peter in Chains from 1507, Dr. Sixtus was a member of the papal conclave in March 1513, i.e. just four months after Skaryna's defence. From 1509 Sisto Gara Della Rovere served as bishop of Padua, and thereby he was also president of the University of Padua.

According to his contemporaries, Sisto Gara Della Rovere was "mediocre, rude and illiterate". He significantly contrasted from his half-brother Galeotto Franciotti Della Rovere (1471 – 1507), known as the

patron of artists and intellectuals. Having chosen a church career, Sixtus "could barely read and write." However, by numerous intrigues after a sudden death of his brother he managed to occupy various important positions in the church hierarchy and successfully maneuver between powerful prelate groups of Giulio de Medici (future Pope Clement VII), Innocenzo Cybo, Lorenzo Pucci and Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena (Moroni 1852, 196; Sanfilippo 1999).

Our analysis of *Acta graduum* indicates that despite his severe gout (Moroni 1852, 196) Sisto Gara Della Rovere attended personal examinations (*privatum*) and awards of doctoral dignity signs until 1516 when his body condition became seriously aggravated. Contrary to Skaryna's acts, some documents from *Acta graduum* include the full name and regalia of Dr. Sixtus. For instance, the record No. 719 contains the following inscription:

> *d. d. Sixti de Ruvere – tituli S. Petri ad Vincula prespiteri cardinalis S. Romane eccl. vicecancellarii et eccl. Paduane presulis – et huius – Studii cancellarii apostolici suffrageneo ac vicario in spiritualibus generali* (Forin 1970, 257).

His presence at Skaryna's exams tells volumes. Obviously, Dr. Sixtus' attention to Skaryna's case can merely be explained by his curiosity, as Skaryna's defense did not provided the Sacred Board members with an opportunity to get generously paid. On the other hand, how difficult was it for Skaryna, to find himself in the world of intrigues, connections and client relationships? How did he overcome these invisible currents? Who were his potential patrons?

One can assume that it was Thaddeo Mussato (Mussatus), another "honorable guest" of Skaryna's defense, who could assume the role of such ‚guardian'. Doctor of medicine and arts, Thaddeo Mussato was a vice-prior of the faculty. He played an important role in the case of Skaryna. Although Mussato was not his promoter, he represented Skaryna at his first appearance before the Sacred Board, reported the circumstances of his arrival, and allegedly chaired all examination meetings. Moreover, Mussato was known as a medical practitioner (Piovan 2009, 228). One more detail should be mentioned: Thaddeo Mussato was promoter of Sperone Speroni, a famous Renaissance humanist and scholar who received his doctorate in arts from the University of Padua in May 1518 (Cammarosano 1920, 11; Forin 1970, 278-81).

One should generally note that close and even "clientelistic" family and business ties linked the University of Padua with the famous Venetian families, church and city authorities. This can be confirmed not only by referring to the names of relatives in *Acta graduum*. For example, Paolo Zabarella probably originated from one of the most influential Paduan families and was a relative of the famous cardinal Francesco Zabarella. The latter is known as a supporter of Padua's alliance with Venice, professor at the University of Padua and fighter against "schism", including the Hussite heresy (Forin 2007, 163-80; Ott 1913).[2] He could also be a relative of Jacopo Zabarella, a renowned philosopher and commentator of Aristotle, who was once invited by Stefan Batory.[3] This situation illustrates complicated economic and social ties between the Church and secular authorities in the 16th century determined by family and business relations. The stories of the aforementioned personalities serve as examples of this lifestyle.

NOMINA DOCTORUM QUI INTERFUERUNT SUNT OR CONNECTIONS WITH PRINTING

Unfortunately, biographical information on many of the attendees of Skaryna's exams is quite limited, although the data on some of them (like Hieronimus de Urbino or Hieronimus a Mullo) can be found in the works of Papadopoli (1726 152-3) and Faggiani (1837, 221). However, the author's efforts to find information about other personalities of Skaryna's doctoral defense were successful in three cases. We refer to these personalities in the order of their appearance in the original *Acta graduum academicorum*. Among the doctors who participated in the disputations (*nomina doctorum qui interfuerunt sunt*) there were:

- Bartholomeus de S. Vito - rev. d. (*reverendus dominus*),
- Antonius de Soncino,
- Cristophorus a Lignamine,

The first one in this list is Bartolomeo Sanvito (1433/35 – 1518). The Getty Union List of Artist Names (ULAN) informs us that Sanvito was born in 1435 in Padua and died after 1518. At the same time, Albinia de la Mare (2009), a renowned authority in 15th century Italian manuscripts, argues that Sanvito died in 1511. However, the documents from the Vatican Library give evidence that even in 1518 Sanvito was alive. Moreover, according to *Acta graduum academicorum*, the last record of Sanvito's presence at the

exams at the University of Padua dates back to February 1, 1516 (Forin 1969, 256).

Bartolomeo Sanvito was a famous Italian Renaissance scribe, illuminator, collector of antiques and one of the founders of italic script (together with the publisher Aldo Manuzio). For many centuries his name had completely disappeared from the Renaissance history and returned from the oblivion only 60 years ago. Only today the value and amplitude of his work comes to the researchers in full force. As of know, more than one hundred manuscripts with Sanvito's works are known. They include copies of Horace, Eusebius, Virgil, Caesar et al. Sanvito's elegant style played a major role in the process of replacing gothic (or blackletter) script with the italic style (cursive). His comments and innovations in using gilt goatskin instead of silk or velvet for book covers became fashionable not only in the book printing business of Padua, but also throughout Italy (Hobson 2009, 7, 10).

Bartolomeo Sanvito was born and raised in Padua. He worked for several years in Rome, travelled throughout Italy, and then went back to Padua. It is known that the list of his patrons and customers included high-ranked officials of the church and secular hierarchy. His customers were cardinal Francesco Gonzaga and Pope Sixtus IV (a granduncle of Sisto Gara Della Rovere who attended Skaryna's doctoral defense). Another example is Marcantonio Morosini. He originated from an ancient and powerful Venetian family, which members were doges of Venice, influential politicians and artists. It is worth noting, that a month before Skaryna the defence of Francesco Morosini took place in Padua and the composition of the Sacred Board was the same. Francesco Morosini was a son of Domenico Morosini, a famous rhetoric, author of *De bene instituta re publica* (On the well managed republic) and a representative of the University of Padua at the Venetian Senate (*Consiglio dei Pregadi*) (Finzi 2012; Gullino 2012).

Some manuscripts also indicate that Sanvito was a priest and a canon (since 1508) at the *Collegiata di Santa Giustina di Monselice* in Padua (Dickerson 2009, 39-62). It is therefore not surprising that Skaryna's defense records call him *reverendus dominus*. At the same time, *Acta graduum* refer to Sanvito as doctor (*Nomina doctorum qui interfuerunt sunt*). This also complies with his canon status, as only priests with a university education and scientific degree could be canons according to the rules established by the Council of Basel (1431-1449).

The Sanvito's statuses of doctor and r*everendus dominus* from *Acta graduum academicorum* are confimed by his close friend Bernardo Bembo. Being one of the most famous architects and antique collectors of his time, Bembo left an inscription about it in the collection of his works: "from the collection of the *Reverend Dominus Bartolomeo Sanvito*, my famous compatriot, on the occasion of the birth of my son Bartolomeo, who was also born in Padua" (Fricker 2009).

Other evidence which reveals a totally different ‚track' of our research on possible acquaintances of Skaryna (and Sanvito) comes from Pietro Bembo, a famous humanist, writer, scientist, and the eldest son of Bernardo Bembo. We found this evidence in an old book, dedicated to the correspondence of a famous Venetian Aldo Manuzio (1449-1515) who made the Italian printing prominent thanks to the excellent level of quality and quantity of his books, and their new format (*octavo* and italics). Aldo's printing sign ‚dolfin' and his Aldines became certain symbols of Venice; the city itself was a leading center of book printing of that time. In the correspondence of 1501, one can find the letter of "Mr. Lorenzo da Pavia, a resident of Venice and a great friend Aldo Manuzio, as well as a correspondent and permanent representative of marquise Isabella d'Este in her communication with painters, book printers and antique collectors" (it is worth mentioning that the same Lorenzo da Pavia in 1500 introduced a ‚certain' Leonardo da Vinci to Isabella dEste, marquise of Mantua, which resulted into her famous portrait sketch). They negotiated a purchase of books by Isabella d'Este from Aldo Manuzio. These books by Virgil, Ovid and Petrarch with 'letters *canzelaresche* (i.e. italics) were of unprecedented beauty." It is also mentioned that Petrarch's manuscript was prepared for publication by Pietro Bembo, who had got it "from a Paduan" Sanvito (Baschet 1867, 9-11).

Thus, an intuitive assumption made in 1964 by Vitaŭt Tumaš – while in Padua Skaryna could not but visited Venice where Aldo Manuzio's publishing activities flourished, a Czech Bible was published (1506) and Cyrillic fonts for the first Serbian books (1493-95) were ordered – has got its development: Skaryna certainly did know Bartolomeo Sanvito which means that he did know about Sanvito's activities and perspectives of book printing!

"Materialization" of possible Skaryna's connections finds its continuation in the cases of two other attendees of his doctoral defense – Antonius de Soncino and Cristophorus a Lignamine.

The name of Antonius de Soncino is particularly noticeable. *Acta graduum academicorum ab anno 1501 ad annum 1550: index nominum cum aliis actibus praemissis* contain his full name and regalia - *Antonius de Soncino de Clementibus, Patavus doctor artium et medicine* (Forin 1982, 167). He originated from a dynasty of Italian Ashkenazi Jews which derives its name from the town of Soncino in Lombardy. The family was known for printing of both Jewish and Latin books from 1484 to 1547 in Soncino, Naples, Brescia, Fano, Rimini and Constantinople. The first edition of the Hebrew Bible was published by the Soncino family (1491). Five generations of this family printed in total about 130 books. The significance of their work was emphasized in one of their publications: "Out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the word of the Lord from Soncino" (Karp 1991; Avanzi 1936).

Perhaps, the assumption of Antonius de Soncino's kinship with the family of famous printers may seem far-fetched, particularly because his Jewish roots could be incompatible with the doctoral degree (it is important to remember that Antonius de Soncino is called ‚doctor of arts and medicine'). At the same time, this possibility could not be excluded altogether, as the University of Padua was at that time the only university in Europe which not only enrolled Jewish students but also provided them with a possibility to obtain doctoral degrees. For instance, Israeli scholars identified 325 Jews who from 1409 to 1816 received doctoral degrees from the University of Padua (Shasha 2002, 388-94, 407; Ruderman 1995, 105). Moreover, another aspect should be considered in this regard. For instance, the most famous member of the Soncino family Gershon (1460-1534) – who published nearly one hundred books in Hebrew and as many in Latin – usually used a latinized versions of his name Jeronimo or Girolamo (*Hieronymus Girolamo Soncino*). Perhaps, Antonius de Soncino could act the same way.

On the other hand, despite its promising perspectives this hypothesis can be wrong and Antonius de Soncino could just be a namesake of the famous family of printers. The doubts about it are even stronger because around that time there lived another Soncino, not related to the family of printers. His name was Raimondo (Raymond, Raimundus) de Soncino and he was the ambassador of the Duke of Milan in London. His name repeatedly appears in the correspondence of the Duke of Milan. His letters to the Duke about the journey of John Cabot and his discovery of North America in 1497 are particularly known (Biggar 1911, 15-21). Nevertheless, the idea that someone related to the book printing was among the attendees of Skaryna's doctoral exams is so attractive that it is difficult to discard it. Therefore, it requires further verification.

Another participant of Skaryna's exams is *Christophorus a Lignamine, Paduanus filius Vincentii notarii, scolaris artium et medicine, doctor collegii artistarum* (Forin 1982, 96). There is not much information about him. An exception is his short but pompous biography written by Niccolò Comneno Papadopoli in his *Historia gymnasii Patavini* (Papadopoli 1726, 320). The biography emphasizes Lignamineus' talent and his comments of Averroes, highly valued by his contemporaries. Papadopoli refers to a three-volume book by a Paduan canon Scardeonius (Bernardini Scardeonii, canonici Patavini. *De antiquitate urbis Patavii, et claris civibus Patavinis in quindecim Clases distincti. Libri tres: Eiusdem appendix de sepulchris insignibus exterorum Patavii iacentium*). It was published in 1560 and praised prominent personalities of Padua. Cristophorus a Lignamine was among them. He is distinguished as an antique collector and even the author of some publications for senator Sebastiano Fuscareno, though it is unknown when they were published (Papadopoli 1726, 321). Moreover, Papadopoli notes that Cristophorus a Lignamine had an older brother Desiderius, a well-known writer.[4]

In addition, since Cristophorus a Lignamine came from Padua, it seems reasonable to focus on another Paduan-born personality – a famous bibliophile, scholar and Catholic bishop Francesco de Lignamine (1400-1462). Many Italian scholars (Strnad 1986) believe that he was a relative of Johannes Philippus de Lignamine (1428 – ?), the first Italian printer who published his first book in Messina in 1470 and thus ended German monopoly on printing in Italy. It is known that he had two children – Angelo and Antonio. One of them, Antonio, later became archbishop and was involved in printing books. Moreover, in his family coat of arms he used symbols of Della Rovere. This fact is not accidental, as Francesco Della Rovere (Pope Sixtus IV) was one of the closest and most

powerful patrons of his father Johannes Philippus de Lignamine. Moreover, Francesco Della Rovere commissioned Johannes Philippus de Lignamine to print numerous books. After the death of Pope Sixtus IV Johannes Philippus de Lignamine went to Spain and worked for King Ferdinand. The latest information about him dates back to 1491 when he sent his last known letter from Spain (Alaimo 1988).

Of course, it is impossible to precisely confirm that Cristophorus a Lignamine was a direct relative of Johannes Philippus de Lignamine. However, it is also impossible to reject another hypothesis. Johannes Philippus de Lignamine personally knew and was supported by Francesco Della Rovere (Pope Sixtus IV). His supposed relative Cristophorus a Lignamine was at least acquainted with Sisto Gara Della Rovere, a grand-nephew of Sixtus IV (as both attended Skaryna's exam).

Targeted research on personalities provides us with the opportunity to see new aspects of the case of Skaryna. Kinships, friendships and guardian relationships – and all this reveals a picture of the complex world, entwined with a web of intrigues, connections and relationships in the University of Padua of Skaryna's times. The fact that among 33 identified attendees of Skaryna's defense there were at least three persons related to printing activities suggests new hypotheses. For example, where and how Skaryna got an idea to publish books.

CONCLUSIONS

Three exam meetings in Padua, during which Francysk Skaryna has been awarded a doctoral degree in medicine, are only a few days of his life. Nevertheless, these ‚only' three meetings provide us with extensive documentary materials, and this topic is still far from being exhausted. Step by step the author was trying to unravel this puzzle, linked with a short but apparently the life-changing moment of Skaryna's biography.

The well-known archival records of the University of Padua opened new opportunities for their interpretation which cannot have "minor" details. For example, despite its alleged "secondariness", we cannot dismiss the beginning of Skaryna's exam at 10 p.m. In fact, this obvious detail did not attracted much attention of the researchers unfamiliar with archival records of other doctoral candidates whose exams were also featured by extremely late beginning. This could quite naturally raise the question how the time of day was calculated in Italy in the 16th century. This gave us an opportunity to clarify the exact time of Skaryna's exams. Instead of *hora XVII* (5 p.m.) for *gratia* and *hora XXII* (10 p.m.) for *tentativum* we got totally "usual" 11 a.m. and 4 p.m.

A comparison of the texts of doctoral defenses acts at the University of Padua at Skaryna's time made us focusing on other areas which encompass administrative procedures, formalities and stages of doctoral degrees in the 16th century Europe in general and at the University of Padua in particular. The study of this "bureaucratic routine" allowed us to clarify some allegedly "minor" issues, like stages of doctoral degrees (*gratia, tentativum, privatum*), obligatory for all applicants. Moreover, these specifications are very important, as they rearrange the emphasis on the issue of the alleged exclusivity of the case of Skaryna. Indeed, he was really poor (*pauper*). Thus, he was granted not only grace (*gratia*) to be admitted for the exam, but also the right to take it for free. However, it was a part of the ordinary procedure, as the archival records of other doctoral candidates demonstrate. A careful reading of the entire context of the examination procedure and its accurate translation also confirm that the *privatum* in Skaryna's case was not "special", but "personal" or "individual" exam and constituted a part of the doctoral degree requirements at the University of Padua.

In fact, the idea to have a look at the context of Skaryna's examinations provided us with the opportunity to see the procedure, examination texts and the degree award criteria. In this regard, it seemed not only useful, but also rational to focus on the atmosphere of Skaryna's times through the development of medicine during the transition from the Middle Ages to the early Modern world. Keeping in mind further career of Skaryna, it is not difficult to imagine young Francysk in Italy where he witnessed the period when medical scientists formed the vanguard of the social and cultural milieu of his time, when medical knowledge was inseparable from logic, philosophy and theology, when the ideas of humanism became intellectually fashionable, and when the cult of Book reigned.

Within this context, an analysis of the attendees of Skaryna's exams has a particular importance. The figures of Bartolomeo Sanvito, Antonius de Soncino, Cristophorus a Lignamine might be related (and

Sanvito was undoubtedly related) to the book printing. Thus, the author's assumptions on the alleged acquaintances and their impact on the future life of doctor and printer Skaryna became more "materialized". The author hopes that her attempt to demonstrate cultural and political climate of Skaryna's exams in Padua through the analysis of the examiners' personalities (bishop Paolo Zabarella and cardinal Sisto Gara Della Rovere), will give an impetus to new studies in this area.

The arrival of Francysk Skaryna – doctor of arts and a poor secretary of the King of Denmark – in Padua was not an accident. He intended to receive his doctoral degree in medicine from the University of Padua, famous for its medical faculty, tolerance, international character and scientific innovations. Skaryna's stay in Padua, at the crossroads of the Renaissance ideas, politics and business, was obviously an important period that determined his further professional activities.

REFERENCES:

[1] The data of Eubel and van Gulik (1923) regarding 1515 can be not fully correct as *Acta graduum mcademicorum* mention d. Pauli Zabarelle as archiep. Pariensis among the attendees of the defense of Ioannis Franscisci Iordanis in 1513 (No. 680, p. 238).

[2] The Zabarella's palace (*Palazzo Zabarella*) still exists in Padua.

[3] Source: Edwards William F., 1960. *The Logic of Iacopo Zabarella*, Columbia University dissertation, pp. 52-3. See also: Mikkeli 2010, 181-91.

[4] Various sources provide different years of publication (1547, 1556 or 1557) made in Venice by a Dominican friar Desiderius on the basis of Cicero's gravestone inscriptions in Zakynthos – Lignamineus, Desiderius 1557. *Facies sepulcri M. Tull. Ciceronis in Zacyntho reperti*, Venis. See Le Clerc 1825, 231.

ANNEXES:

Forin, Elda Martellozzo (ed.), MCMLXIX (1969). *Acta Graduum Academicorum ab anno 1501 – ad annum 1525*, Instituto per la storia dell'Università di Padova, Padova: Antentore, pp. 226-8:

No. 649 (p. 226)

1512 nov. 5. Padue in eccl. S. Urbani hora XVII. Gratie in med. amore Dei mag. Francisci Rutheni q. d. Luce.

Convocato – sacratissimo collegio – art. et med. doctorum – de mandato – art. et med. doct. d. Thadei Mussati viceprioris, -- d. prior dixit: "Excellentissimi d. doctores, causa convocationis – est ista: est quidam – art. doctor pauper qui a longinquissimis partibus forsam per quatuor millia milliaria et ultra ab hac – civitate pro argumentando famam – huius – florentissimi Gimnasii – ad illam se contulit et vellet sibiconcedi de – gratia speciali – in med. – Qui quidem – doctor – nominator d. Franciscus q. d. Luce Scorina de Poloczko Ruthenus". – Fuit introductus dictus mag. Franciscus et petiit – sibi concede gratie in med. amore Dei. – Datis ballotis, fuit obtentum dictum partitum, nem. discr.

A.A.U. (Archivio Antico dell'Universita di Padova), 321, f. 5v

No. 650 (p. 226-7)

1512 nov. 6. Padue in eccl. S. Urbani hora XXII. Tentativum in med. d. mag. Francisci Rutheni.

Convocatis – doctoribus sacri collegii d. art. et med. doctorum – in loco solito ex mandato – art. et med. doct. d. mag. Thadei Mussati vicevprioris, tenatus fuit – art. doct. d. mag. Franciscus q. d. Luce Scorina de Poloczko Ruthenus in med. supra punctis hoc mane sibi assignatis et, quoniam – elegantissime se habuit, ideo – nem. discr., fuit idoneus iudicatus et – ad examen suum privatum in med. – admissus, sub promotoribus – d. mag. Francisco de Noali, d. mag. Francisco de Este, d. mag. Hieronimu a Mulo, d. mag. Bartholomeo Barisono et d. mag. Hieronimo de Urbino. Qui quidem d. Franciscus iuravit.

Nomina doctorum qui interfuerunt: d. mag. Thadeus Mussatus viceprior, d. mag. Bartholomeus a Volta, d. mag. Franciscus de Noali, d. mag. Franciscus de Este, d. mag. Hieronimus a Mullo, d. mag. Nicolaus de Noali, d. mag. Aurelius Boneto, d. mag. Hieronimus Rubeus, rev. d. Bartholomeus de S. Vito, d. mag. Hieronimus Mariperto, d. mag. Bartholomeus Barisonus, d. mag. Hieronimus de Urbino, d. mag. Antonius de Soncino et d. mag. Marcus Antonius de Ianua.

A.A.U., 321, f. 6

No. 651 (p. 227-8)

1512 nov. 9

Privatum examen in med. – d. mag. Francisci q. d. Luce Scorina de Poloczko Rutheni secretarii Regis Datiae coram ultrascripto reverendissimo d. suffraganeo et vicareo, (footnote 2) – in asistentia – art. et med. doct. d. mag. Francisci Fumanelli (footnote 3) – univ. artistarum vicerect., -- qui fuit – nem. pen. diss. – approbatus, sub promotoribus suis art. et med. doctoribus

dominis magistris Bartholomeo Barisono qui dedit insignia, Francisco de Novali, Francisco Estensi, Hieronimo a Mullo et Hieronimo de Urbino (footnote 4).

Testes: - art. doctoris domini magistri Alovisius Zuchatus Tarvisinus et Daniel de Foroiulio Patavinus; art. scholares domini Michael Zambonus q. d. Iacobi civis Venetus et Gaspar de Gabrielis f. d. Petri civis Padue; d. Valerius de Largis cler. Paduanus.

Diversorum (Archivio della Curia Vescovile di Padova), 49, f. 122

(1) Padue in ep. pal. loco solito examinum –

Convocatis – doctoribus sacri collegii d. artistarum et medicorum – de mandato – art. et med. doct. d. Thadei Mussati viceprioris – (A.A.U., 321, f. 6v)

(2) Coram – d.d. Paulo Zabarella – ep. Argolisensi – d. d. Sixti – tituli S. Petri ad Vincula presbiteri cardinalis S. Romane eccl. vicecancellarii et ecc. Paduane perpetui administratoris – comitisque Saccensis ac. – Studii – Paduani cancellarii apostolici suffraganei – ac vicario – (A.A.U., 321, f. 6v)

(3) De Verona

(4) Nomina – doctorum qui interfuerunt sunt: d. mag. Thadeus Mussatus viceprior, d. mag. Bartholomeus a Volta, d. presbiter Iacobus de Curte, d. mag. Hieronimus de Cathaneis, d. mag. Nicolaus de Ianua, d. mag. Baptista a Galta, d. mag. Franciscus de Noali, d. mag. Franciscus de Este, d. mag. Hieronimus a Mullo, d. mag. Nicolaus de Noali, d. Aurelius Boneto, d. mag. Hieronimis Rubeus, rev. d. Bartholomeus de S. Vito, d. mag. Hieronimus Mariperto, d. mag. Bartholomeus Barisonus, d. mag. Hieronimus de Urbino, d. mag. Franciscus Porcelinus, d. mag. Carolus de Ianua, d. mag. Antonius de Soncino, d. mag. Paulus a Sole, d. mag. Petrus de Noali, d. mag. Andreas de Aliotis, d. mag. Marcus-Antonius de Ianua, d. mag. Cristophorus a Lignamine. (A.A.U., 321, f. 6v).

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